

Jaguar Conservation Team (JAGCT)- Habitat Subcommittee Summary Notes
Silver City, New Mexico
October 21, 1999

Meeting Opened - ca. 10:10 am

Ground Rules - Introductions and ground rules for the meeting were presented.

Handouts – Agenda for this meeting, Quick Guide to Habitat Assessment (T. Povilitis)

Review of last meeting's minutes

Mapping information was added in the last meeting minutes to better inform the group and ensure that everyone was clear on our direction. Mapping is part of the commitment within the Conservation Agreement. Discussions regarding mapping will occur during this meeting.

Also, during this time, a question was raised regarding NM Game and Fish Department's participation on the committee and at this meeting. Information and an invitation were sent, seeking participation, and some individuals have provided information for the group. Suggestions were made to contact offices in Las Cruces and Silver City. We have most of the information needed, but lack prey density information.

Habitat encroachment has been discussed at previous meetings (copy provided at April meeting). We have not received any more information from the Science Advisory Group since April. The criterion works with any type of habitat map and includes some reference to corridors and wash complexes. The criterion are based on distance from known jaguar locations (50 mile radius), habitat association (Brown and Lowe), and historical occurrences. Other criteria included prey density across historic range (10 miles) and distance from surface water.

Status of Last Meeting's Action Items

No additional agenda items were received.

Mike Pruss contacted Terry Johnson to discussed pursuit of funding for studies in Mexico. Terry expressed that the group needs to decide what each effort entails and that we may wish to establish a proposal review process within the group. Pursuit of additional funding opportunities is an adequate task for the Habitat Subcommittee, and Mexico is an appropriate area to allocate some of these funds.

Information Exchange

The group discussed ways to exchange information better (both within the group and outside the group). Internally, notes will be transposed from the recording, typed and then sent to the group. Hopefully, this process will expedite distribution. Externally, we need a process to share information between the various agencies and participants within the Habitat Subcommittee. One suggestion is through Internet and e-mail conferences. Basically, anyone listed on the mailing list

will receive the information as it is posted on the web-site. Other discussion involved using AGFD Mammals Program Manager (Bill Van Pelt) or Mike's replacement in Tucson (Tim Snow) as coordinators for the e-mail/web-site. Bottom-line, communication is a two-way street.

The e-mail system still requires a commitment on the part of the participants to use this mechanism. **Tony Povilitis volunteered to come up with some structure ideas and to check into the feasibility further.**

An additional comment on communication is that the group needs to incorporate other conservation groups and plans within the recommendations. For instance, the black-tailed prairie dog conservation plan may or may not affect this plan. Where and how do all these plans come together? With all these plans being developed, we need to establish a baseline for communication between all groups. Landowners are willing to participate, but have concerns when all these issues are being addressed at the same time, with little communication between each conservation group taking place.

Subcommittee Progress - Where are we regarding our goals?

Literature Review was completed some time ago. It was handed out to the entire group for review, additions, and comments. Some of the things Raul Valdez put together were added to the final draft.

Suitability Criteria was discussed in a graph form at the June 98 meeting in Willcox. At the same time, we developed a list of prey and potential prey items, based on the literature and similarity of species found in Arizona that does not occur in other places for jaguars. These two aspects are completed. As new information becomes available, we will update our lists.

Sightings Protocol – Jack Childs and Mike Pruss are finalizing a list of contacts for potential sightings. NM Game and Fish Department will have to be involved in NM.

Project Reviews – Because of the jaguar being listed, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is mandated to conduct project reviews. Their process parallels the process identified in the conservation agreement. At this point, any review by our group would be redundant and unnecessary. The JAGCT Habitat Subcommittee will continue to review any projects where non-federal funding mechanisms are used and in which private landowners may have specific concerns. As far as the federal process and setting up guidelines, guidelines are in place for the Coronado National Forest, BLM Safford Field Office, and Wildlife Services. **Before the next meeting, please provide comment on the guidelines to Tony Povilitis.** The jaguar section of the Forest Service Guidelines will be posted on the web-site. **Mike Pruss will distribute the BLM guidelines.**

Mexico Update – Nothing to report. Arizona State University is responsible for the project. Dave Brown is the principal investigator, and Carlos Lopez is his graduate student.

Habitat Inventories – In Arizona, the AGFD conducts protection and enhancement surveys for a variety of wildlife. It would be very feasible to do these for jaguars. Obviously, habitat inventories need to be done first. We need to involve NM Game and Fish and see where they are

on these sorts of programs. The Habitat Subcommittee can not request the agreements. These must come from whatever agency has that particular function in the area in question.

State specific maps – Arizona maps are completed for the criterion that was established. New Mexico maps have not been developed. The information has been gathered but has not been entered into our database. Mike Pruss presented the GIS overlays for Arizona. We need to develop a ranking system that will eliminate and strengthen the criterion we establish as being important or not. An example is the Cactus Ferruginous Pygmy Owl (**to be distributed by Mike Pruss**). The basic concept is to evaluate the principal components of habitat that are out there and give them a score. Then total the score, which gives an overall evaluation of the habitat.

Protection and Enhancement Agreements – These are agreements with private landowners. In December 98, information regarding the AGFD Habitat Stewardship Program and establishment of easements was distributed to the subcommittee. Within AGFD, we can not act on anything unless a private landowner approaches us. Private landowners are strongly recognized for their efforts in these programs (if desirable). The group should develop additional mechanisms for recognition.

Threats – We still need to develop a list of potential threats, as they relate to habitat. Some examples that were brought up included establishment of roads, access, human encroachment, threat of illegal take, etc. As a group, we need to develop the list, in addition to those identified on the Federal Register. The initial list will be considered “brainstorming” with revised lists to come from the next meeting. Monitoring these threats is also important. The first step is to identify the threats. **Sarah ??? will initiate collection of the brainstorming list, possibly via e-mail.**

Next Meeting- Jaguar Conservation Team Meeting, January 19, 2000, Douglas, Arizona

Action Items

Tony Povilitis volunteered to come up with some structure ideas and to check into the feasibility of e-mail mechanisms for group discussions.

Jack Childs and Mike Pruss are finalizing a list of contacts for potential sightings.

Comments on the jaguar section of USFS guidelines need to be sent to Tony Povilitis.

Mike Pruss will distribute the BLM guidelines. Comments from the group need to be sent to Tony Povilitis.

Mike Pruss will distribute the Cactus Ferruginous Pygmy Owl Habitat Ranking Protocol to the committee.

Sarah will initiate collection of the potential threats brainstorming list, possibly via e-mail.

Adjourn

Meeting was adjourned at ca. 1:05 pm.